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Sent Saturday, October 16, 2010 7:19 am
To hihwmanagementplan@noaa.gov
Subject Comments on Management Plan Review

October 16, 2010

Management Plan Review Coordinator

Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary

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I am writing to provide comments on the Management Plan Review for the Hawaiian Islands National Humpback Whale Marine Sanctuary, specifically to address the inclusion of an additional marine mammal species under the protection of the sanctuary, the resident population of “insular” false killer whales.

The insular population of false killer whales are a relatively undiscovered treasure of Hawaiian wildlife. Being the only known island-associated false killer whale population in the world, evidence suggests they are genetically distinct from other stocks. Having reportedly experienced a severe reduction in population size in the past three decades, their numbers are estimated at 150 or less. They are currently being considered for listing under the Endangered Species Act. It is clear that efforts must be made to inform the public of this magnificent species' plight in order to reduce the human impact on this population. Impacts may include high levels of organic pollutants and competition with humans for prey, specifically large pelagic game fish of which subjects them to declines in fish stocks due to overfishing. Designation of the insular population of false killer whales under the sanctuary's protection would be a valuable step in recovering this population. Sanctuary involvement would help in creating public awareness and support for conservation efforts and could provide scientific research that may ultimately reverse the decline of this magnificent and important species.

Sincerely,

Joseph Dlugo

